



Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare

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Chairman Eric Cantor, Virginia
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Hezbollah Eyes Lebanese Electoral Power-Grab

Hezbollah-controlled Lebanon comparable to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan

With the Lebanese parliamentary elections set to begin on May 29th, Hezbollah terrorists are mobilizing to consolidate their political power and impact the direction the government. Using its established political wing as a media cover, the terrorist group has been organizing militia and other terror elements to increase its 13-seat representation within the Lebanese Parliament and seize greater political strength, military control, and regional influence.

A History of Terror

Hezbollah, or the “Party of God,” is a radical Iranian-backed Lebanese Islamic terrorist group dedicated to the destruction of Israel. Hezbollah’s decades long murder-campaigns have killed or maimed thousands of innocent civilians and have caused untold misery to Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East. Hezbollah has been designated a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State and was widely regarded as Yassir Arafat’s chief terrorist collaborator. They have organized, planned and taken credit for numerous suicide attacks against Israel and were responsible for the infamous 1983 attack on the US Marine barracks in Beirut which claimed the lives of 241 Marines.

Today, Hezbollah continues to operate as a dominate terrorist organization, showing greater sophistication, resources and technical ability. Hezbollah maintains 13,000 rockets which threaten Israel’s security, and last month, it was reported that a Hezbollah unmanned aerial vehicle conducted reconnaissance operations in Israeli airspace. Hezbollah also receives from Iran a reported \$100-200 million a year in aid and direct terror support from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards based in Lebanon.

Hezbollah’s Attempt to Seize Power

Currently, Hezbollah is a stateless organization dependent on other countries for money, logistical support and refuge, but the elections and potential political reforms in Lebanon may provide Hezbollah a rare opportunity to assume a veil of legitimacy through increased political control.

Lebanon’s political system, known as the confessional system, guarantees that Christians and Muslims each control fifty percent of the Lebanese Parliament. Critics of the confessional system have called for its abolishment as required by the Taif Accord, which has governed Lebanon since 1989. The abandonment of this system would allow the nation’s Muslim population to have representation in their parliament proportional to their estimated seventy percent of the population. The advance of democracy in Lebanon should be applauded, but the world must be cognizant of the inherent risks associated with the replacement of the confessional system.

The election of a new parliament and subsequent reforms to its electoral system will determine Lebanon’s fate. If Hezbollah gains greater political power through corruption, violence, or political reform, its capability and willingness to attack Israel and the forces of freedom will grow with disastrous consequences. A victory for Hezbollah in the aftermath of Syria’s withdrawal would also provide Iran with a significant return on its investment in terror.

Allowing a Taliban-Like Government in Lebanon

Hezbollah electoral gains could lead to a global threat similar to the Taliban government in Afghanistan. If Hezbollah takes control in Lebanon, terror-training camps in southern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley could spread across the country, attacks on Israel could increase and terrorism could have a new world capital. Hezbollah, influenced by their Iranian and Syrian masters, would have an official government to export terror, buy arms, trade, levy taxes, spend, borrow and have a vote at the United Nations.

Through UN Security Council Resolution 1559, President Bush and the nations of the world called for Hezbollah to disarm and Syria to withdraw from Lebanon. This was an attempt to ensure freedom for Lebanese citizens. The threat of a new Taliban-like government, however run by Hezbollah, is cause for concern for all nations desiring freedom and peace in this volatile region of the world. Such a development would create a pipeline of terror fueling anti-democratic, anti-American radicalism, threaten Israel's security and further jeopardize stability in the Middle East.